DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 240 448 CG 017 278

AUTHOR Bell, T. H.
TITLE Speech by T. H. Bell, Secretary of Education, Prepared for the Conference for Youth on Teenage Drinking and Driving (Chevy Chase, MD, March 26, 1983).
INSTITUTION Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 26 Mar 83
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Alcoholic Beverages; Alcoholism; Community Programs; *Drinking; Drug Abuse; *Drug Education; *Educational Environment; Parent Participation; *Youth Problems

ABSTRACT

It has been argued that alcoholism is the single worst social affliction in the world. In addition to the dangers of drinking and driving, alcohol and other drugs also have a detrimental and disruptive impact on education. Harassed principals and teachers are distracted from the main mission of education by violence and other anti-social behavior brought about in part by the direct or indirect use of drugs. Alcohol abuse lowers performance and grades, creates disruptive classroom behavior, increases school vandalism, and impedes the learning process for non-drinking students. For these reasons the President has made the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse a high priority. And the key to prevention is education concerning the truth about alcohol. For 10 years the Department of Education has been developing school-based alcohol and drug abuse education programs. The Department's primary goal is to provide leadership, training and technical assistance to school systems to use local resources to deal with local problems. The program has established teams of school and community personnel, supported by training and follow-up assistance, in every state and territory. A growing number of parent groups is springing up all over the country as well. Those interested in acting for change can make a difference that may literally change the world. (JAC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED240448

Speech by

T. H. Bell
Secretary of Education

Prepared for the
Conference for Youth on Teenage
Drinking and Driving

March 26, 1983 — 1:00 P.M.
National 4-H Center, Chevy Chase, MD

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☑ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

CG017278

THANK YOU DR. MAYER FOR THAT KIND INTRODUCTION AND FOR GIVING ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS IMPORTANT CONFERENCE.

I AM ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO BE HERE WITH CABINET COLLEAGUES AND CONGRESSMAN BARNES TO SHARE WITH YOU MY PLAIN TWO CENTS WORTH IN THIS ONGOING CAMPAIGN TO ALERT OUR NATION'S YOUTH TO THE DANGERS OF DRINKING AND DRIVING. I REMEMBER FROM MY YOUTH AN OLD SLOGAN: "ALCOHOL AND GASOLINE DON'T MIX," I'D LIKE TO ADD TO THAT BY SAYING THAT ALCOHOL AND EDUCATION DON'T MIX EITHER.

THE AMERICAN WRITER NELSON ALGREN ONCE WROTE THE FOLLOWING BITS OF ADVICE, "NEVER EAT AT ANY PLACE CALLED MOM'S; NEVER PLAY CARDS WITH ANYONE CALLED DOC; AND NEVER GET INVOLVED WITH A WOMEN WHO HAS MORE PROBLEMS THAN YOU HAVE".

AND A FEW YEARS AGO THE "ME-GENERATION" USED TO SAY, "NEVER TRUST ANYONE OVER 30". NOW I AM ABOUT TWICE THAT AGE. BUT I AM ENCOURAGED FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE THAT YOU HIGHLY SELECTED AND QUALIFIED LEADERS OF THE NEW "US-GENERATION" WILL AT LEAST GIVE US SENIOR CITIZENS THE BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT AND HEAR US OUT. THERE'S AN OLD SAYING WHICH BEARS REPEATING, "IF YOUTH BUT KNEW WHAT AGE COULD TELL". NOW I'D LIKE TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF MY THOUGHTS ABOUT EDUCATION AND ALCOHOL FROM MY PECULIAR PERSPECTIVE -- AND ENHANCED AGE.

OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS AGO THE GREEK PHILOSPHER ARISTOTLE OBSERVED: "ALL WHO HAVE MEDITATED ON THE ART OF GOVERNING MANKIND HAVE BEEN CONVINCED THAT THE FATE OF EMPIRES DEPENDS UPON THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH".

AND LAST MONTH COLUMNIST WILLIAM BUCKLEY WROTE IN THE WASHINGTON POST THAT: "ALCOHOLISM IS ARGUABLY, THE SINGLE WORST SOCIAL AFFLICTION IN THE WORLD. IT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR JOBS LOST, MARRIAGES DISSOLVED, VIOLENCE UNPREMEDITATED, AND DEATH. THERE ARE EVEN PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE THE FINAL WINNER IN THE EAST-WEST STRUGGLE MAY PROVE TO BE THE SOCIETY THAT MOST SUCCESSFULLY WITHSTANDS THE PARASITIC DRAIN OF ALCOHOLISM".

THAT IS THE PRIME REASON PRESIDENT REAGAN IS CONVINCED, AS I AM, THAT ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE IS "ONE OF THE GREATEST PROBLEMS FACING US INTERNALLY IN THE UNITED STATES".

WE ALL KNOW OR SHOULD KNOW THAT ALCOHOL PLUS AN AUTOMOBILE EQUALS THE BIGGEST KILLER OF YOUTH IN THE UNITED STATES TODAY. AND THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND OR IN THE MINDS OF MILLIONS OF PARENTS, TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND LEGISLATORS THAT ALCOHOL (AND OTHER DRUGS) HAVE A DETRIMENTAL AND DISRUPTIVE IMPACT ON THE VITAL EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES UPON WHICH YOU, OUR SOCIETY AND CIVILIZATION DEPEND.

IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT ALCOHOL HAS MANY NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON OUR SCHOOLS WHOSE PRIMARY FUNCTION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF THE FUTURE GENERATIONS, IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED OR SIDETRACKED. WHY? BECAUSE HARASSED PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS ARE DISTRACTED FROM THE MAIN MISSION OF EDUCATION BY VIOLENCE AND OTHER ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR BROUGHT ABOUT IN PART BY THE DIRECT OR INDIRECT USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL:

SPECIFICALLY ALCOHOL ABUSE IS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS:

1. LOWERS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND GRADES.

2. INCREASES DROP-OUTS, TRUANCIES, PREGNANCIES, RUNAWAYS, AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR IN GENERAL.

3. CREATES DISRUPTIVE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS.

4. ENCOURAGES SCHOOL WIDE DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS, I.E., FIGHTS AND RANDOM VIOLENCE, CLASS-CUTTING, CHEATING, TARDINESS, ABSENTEEISM, AND SUSPENSIONS.

5. INCREASES SCHOOL VANDALISM, LITTER AND GENERAL DISREPAIR.

6. IMPEDES THE LEARNING PROCESS FOR NON-DRINKING STRAIGHT STUDENTS.

7. CREATES PROBLEMS FOR SCHOOL GOVERNANCE.

8. CONTRIBUTES TO THE LOSS OF CONFIDENCE AND FAITH IN THE SCHOOLS.

9. HARMS STUDENT-PARENTAL RELATIONSHIPS AND ADDS TO FAMILY INSTABILITY.

10. AND IS THE SOURCE OF PARENT AND SCHOOL CONFLICTS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS AS EACH BLAMES THE OTHER FOR NOT DOING THEIR JOB.

FOR THESE AND OTHER REASONS, I AM CONVINCED THAT OF THE MANY PROBLEMS FACING OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS TODAY NONE HAS MORE POTENTIAL FOR THE DISRUPTION OF THE VITAL EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES THAN THE WIDESPREAD ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS BY OUR STUDENT POPULATION.

IT IS FOR THESE REASONS THAT THE PRESIDENT HAS MADE THE PREVENTION OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE SUCH A VERY HIGH PRIORITY OF HIS ADMINISTRATION. PRESIDENT REAGAN HAS ALSO SPOKEN OF THE NEED TO LAUNCH A NATION-WIDE CAMPAIGN OF PREVENTION BECAUSE, HE SAID "I THINK WE ARE RUNNING A RISK OF LOSING A GREAT PART OF THE WHOLE GENERATION IF WE DON'T".

AND THE KEY TO PREVENTION IS MORE EDUCATION FOR THE CURRENT YOUTH OF AMERICA AND TOMORROW'S LEADERS CONCERNING THE TRUTH ABOUT ALCOHOL'S FRANKENSTEIN QUALITIES.

THEREFORE THE WHITE HOUSE HAS DEVELOPED A STRATEGY FOR PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE AND DRUG TRAFFICKING. THIS SETS THE TONE AND DIRECTION FOR THE ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS DURING THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS. THE ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS A PART OF THIS STRATEGY.

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS THE SOLE FEDERAL AGENCY WITH A BROAD MANDATE TO WORK WITH THE NATION'S SCHOOLS. FOR TEN YEARS WE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPING SCHOOL-BASED ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE EDUCATION PROGRAMS. OUR PRIMARY ROLE IS TO PROVIDE LEADERSHIP, TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOL SYSTEMS FOR THE PURPOSE OF DEVELOPING A LOCAL CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH LOCAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE PROBLEMS USING LOCAL RESOURCES.

THE PROGRAM HAS A DECADE-LONG RECORD OF DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS, HAS INVESTED NEARLY $40 MILLION DOLLARS AND HAS DIRECTLY IMPACTED ON APPROXIMATELY 5 MILLION INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS AND INDIRECTLY AFFECTED MILLIONS MORE.

THE PROGRAM HAS ESTABLISHED TEAMS OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PERSONNEL, SUPPORTED WITH TRAINING AND FOLLOW-UP ASSISTANCE, IN EVERY STATE AND TERRITORY: 4,500 TEAMS, INVOLVING APPROXIMATELY 18,000 ADULT WORKERS, AND REACHING APPROXIMATELY 500,000 YOUTHS ANNUALLY. IN 1982, 120 SCHOOL TEAMS WERE TRAINED AND 475 SCHOOLS RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AS DID MOST OF THE 50 STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES. (THE BUDGET OF FY '83 AND FY '84 IS $2.85 MILLION)

AFTER THEIR REGIONAL TRAINING, LOCAL SCHOOL TEAMS TRAINED MANY ADDITIONAL TEAMS IN OTHER SCHOOL AS WELL AS PARENT TEAMS IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES. SIMULTANEOUSLY, THE NATIONAL NETWORK, CONSISTING OF THE 475 LOCAL PROJECTS AND STATE AGENCIES, DISSEMINATED SUCCESSFUL EXEMPLARY PROJECTS TO OTHER INTERESTED SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ESTABLISHING THESE LOCAL SCHOOL TEAMS WRITE TO THE DEPARTMENT AND ASK FOR A COPY OF "THE SCHOOL TEAM APPROACH". (ED 195 926)

WE WILL BE PLEASED TO PROVIDE TO OUR 5 REGIONAL ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE TRAINING, RESOURCE CENTERS ANY PROGRAM MODELS DEVELOPED BY YOUR TEAMS SO THAT THEY CAN MAKE THEM AVAILABLE TO SCHOOL SYSTEMS RECEIVING TRAINING OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE VARIOUS CENTERS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS ON ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE YOU SHOULD WRITE TO THE NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSES ON DRUG ABUSE AND ALCOHOL ABUSE IN ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND.

I AM ALSO VERY ENCOURAGED BY THE GROWING NUMBER AND VARIETY OF PARENT ORGANIZATIONS THAT ARE SPRINGING UP ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. AT LATEST COUNT, THERE WERE OVER 3,000 PARENT GROUPS LIKE THE LOCAL PANDAA ORGANIZATION IN FAIRFAX COUNTY. PERHAPS THE BEST KNOWN ORGANIZATION IS THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF PARENTS FOR DRUG-FREE YOUTH. AS YOU KNOW FIRST LADY NANCY REAGAN IS ACTIVELY WORKING WITH THIS GROUP.

WHAT WE ARE SEEING TODAY IS A TRUE PHENOMENA, NAMELY A PARENT'S MOVEMENT FOR THE 1980s. AND I'D LIKE TO ENCOURAGE ALL THE MANY PARENT GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES TO ACTIVELY COOPERATE IN A NEW AND NEEDED PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS. THEN WE CAN THEN ACHIEVE THE AMBITIOUS GOAL SET BY MRS. REAGAN, "A PARENT GROUP IN EVERY COMMUNITY OF OUR COUNTRY". I CAN ASSURE YOU THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION WILL CONTINUE TO DO ITS PART. BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 1982, APPROXIMATELY 83,150 VOLUNTEER HOURS WERE MOBILIZED IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES BY THE LOCAL SCHOOL TEAMS, OF WHICH 20,525 HOURS WERE CONTRIBUTED BY PARENTS. ALSO DURING THE SIX-MONTH PERIOD, THE SCHOOL TEAMS GENERATED $1,400,000 IN SUPPORT FROM OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCES.

Conclusion

The historian and philosopher Will Durant once observed, "Sixty years ago I knew everything, now I know nothing: education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance".

We can no longer afford our past ignorance concerning the deleterious effect of alcohol and drugs on the education and health of our country's youth.

They are truly "life-wasting" substances and they represent an American crisis of the first order.

History is replete with examples of how one person's will can make a difference and change the very course of history itself.

You students and your teams gathered here today are evidence that you are interested in taking those deliberate steps and actions which can culminate in larger movements that may literally change the world.

MY GENERATION IS COUNTING ON YOURS TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE TO CHANGE THE PREVAILING ASSUMPETIONS THAT THE ONLY GOOD "HIGH" IS ONE THAT IS CHEMICAL! YOU KNOW THERE ARE OTHERS:

1. DEDICATION TO EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING AND SELFLESS LIVING.

2. SERVICE TO THE NATION.

3. COMMITMENT TO OTHERS.

4. HIGH ACHIEVEMENT IN YOUR CHOSEN LIFE'S WORK.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT WE CAN COUNT ON YOU TO CHANGE THE FALSE EXPECTATIONS AND ERRONEOUS ASSUMPTIONS CONCERNING ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE FOR YOUR GENERATION AND GENERATIONS TO COME.